



Breathing new life into grain silos

Overlooking the Tamar River Basin in Launceston, Tasmania, the historic Kings Wharf grain silos have a new lease of life.

Originally erected in 1960, the grain silos had been unused for decades; that was until 2016 when construction began to rejuvenate the structure and transform the silo barrels into a state-of-the-art hotel.

The new ten-story Peppers Silo Hotel comprises 108 rooms—52 of which are located in the former silo barrels and 56 in a new North Tower. As well, the \$25-million development features four apartments, a restaurant and café, a cocktail bar, conference facilities, a gymnasium, and an underground car park.

ARCHITECT SPECIFIES PRECAST

When embarking on the design journey, Artas Architect's Scott Curran, says the focus was on creating an aesthetic that complemented the existing structure and adjacent waterfront.

"The most important thing was opting for a building material that can achieve a high quality of finish and is maintenance-free," Mr Curran reveals.

"We were working with the four large silos, and it was precast concrete that allowed us to complement these existing structures."

National Precast member, Duggans Precast, supplied the precast concrete elements that were integral in achieving the development's aesthetic and sustainability ambitions. The company manufactured \$1.2 million of precast columns, lift shafts, structural wall panels, and façade wall panels for the project. Opting for a precast solution saved approximately \$2 million and two months off the total timeline.

Precaster

Duggans Precast

Location

Launceston, TAS

Client

Errol Stewart

Architect

ARTAS

Builder

JMC Construction & Developments

Engineer

RARE. Innovation

www.nationalprecast.com.au





RIPPLED FAÇADE FROM A RANGE OF FINISHES

A range of finishes have been applied to the precast façade panels; some have a smooth finish, some have exposed dolomite aggregate, some have been polished with oxide, and some have been manufactured with custom-made moulds.

According to Mr Curran, the façade design mimics its Tamar River valley location. Inspired by the surrounding region, where tranquil waters meet the rugged earth, the design beautifully complements the hotel's peaceful vista.

"While on the main façade we have contrasted a smooth and exposed aggregate finish, the end panels are a combination of polished and off-form panels, which create a ripple effect that reflects the same pattern as the river mudflats," Mr Curran details.

"Artas is really pleased with the consistency of finish and colour."

STRUCTURAL BENEFITS

As well as delivering a beautiful aesthetic, the project's precast has served a structural purpose too.

The North Tower features precast façade panels that are supported from the edge of floor slabs using concrete corbels poured integrally with the panels for lower levels.

Duggans' Project Manager, Andrew Duggan, says in the North Tower, there are no traverse walls on the lower levels, therefore the horizontal load treatment includes portalised columns and lift shafts.

"Precast columns are located in the floors that have hotel rooms, to suit the desired layout," Mr Duggan explains.

"The lift shaft panels have been dowelled and stressed together vertically to resist earthquake and wind loads."

A LANDMARK HOTEL

The Peppers Silo Hotel officially opened in June 2018 and is set to inject \$10 million into the local Tasmanian economy annually. As well, it has created 50 new jobs and with tourism booming, it will be a welcome addition to Launceston's existing accommodation options.

The hotel's owner and developer, Errol Stewart, believes Launceston was in need of new tourism projects and says this development will help meet hotel room demands during summer.

"I am proud of what we have delivered and I believe this building will continue to be iconic for Launceston for years to come," Mr Stewart says.

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